

Commission on Aging
June 23,2022, at 9:30 a.m.
Virtually Via Zoom

Commission Members : Wayne Berman, Virginia Cain, Elizabeth (Betsy) Carrier, Jean Dinwiddie, Joyce Dubow, David Engel, Dr. Arunima Ghosh, Mona Y. Grieser, Morris Klein, Kendell Matthews, Nanine Meiklejohn, Helen (Laurie) Pross, Edgar Rivas, Beverly Rollins, Barbara Selter, Katie Smith, Mary Sweeney, Marsha Weber, T. Ryan Wilson, , Janice Zalen **Alumni:** Stephanie Edelstein, Austin Heyman, Isabelle Schoenfeld, Rev Vikram, Sibon Ncube **Liaisons:** Sara Swarr, Denise Isreal **Staff:** Odile Brunetto, Dr. Patrice L. McGhee, Shawn Brennan, Tremayne Jones, Marcia Pruzan **Guest Speakers:** County Council President Albernoz; DHHS Legislative Analyst Essie McGuire; Office of County President, Beth Shuman; Council Legislative Analyst Tara Clemons
Absent: Neal Brown, Nkiru j. Ezeani, Rev. Dr. Ruby Moon, Karon Phillips, Tho Tran, Hillery Tumba, and Arthur Williams

Welcome- Barbara, Chair

- Roll Call/ Attendees

- **AAA Director updates – Dr. Patrice Mc Ghee, Director Area Agencies on Aging**
 - On Thursday, June 15, Dr. McGhee, and the Honorable Susan Lee attended the Montgomery Serves Award Program. The Neal Potter Award was presented to Charlotte Holiday and the Honorable Chung Pak. It was great to be in-person and see folks and listen to all the achievements that people are contributing to society and to the community. Also ,it was an opportunity to meet our community partners.
 - Highlights for older adult residents from the Fiscal Year 23 approved budget: capital improvement for Holiday Park; \$228.6 million Transportation funds to restore Ride On and Call-n-Ride services to pre-pandemic levels; Ride On Reimagined study; electric bus with zero emissions. AAA will receive added Long Term Care Ombudsman position; six additional APS positions. There is also an increase to the adult medical daycare supplement of \$1.4 million.
 - Last week was World Elder Abuse Awareness Week, this year's theme was “Staying Connected Safely.” Over 260 participated on Wednesday.
 - 4th year of 4-year annual plan was submitted June 10 to Maryland Department of Aging. The document highlighted FY22 achievements and future projects.
 - Vacant positions: Caregiver Program Manager (now interviewing candidates). Long Term Care Ombudsman position; two Community Health Nurses. They have identified a nurse manager but waiting on the HR process.

- **Presentation -Budget Priorities of County Council and County Government for FY 2024- County Council President Albernoz , DHHS Legislative Analyst Essie Mc Guire, Office of County Council President Beth Shuman**

Essie Mc Guire informed us that County Council President Albernoz had been called away on an urgent matter for the Council and sends his regrets. Beth Shuman and Essie McGuire will speak about fiscal year 23 and fiscal year 24.

- Beth Shuman- Budget items that were priorities of the Commission include six positions staffing for Adult Protective Services; Long Term Ombudsman position; escorted transportation returning to pre- COVID levels; and plans to monitor Access Hears. We have acknowledged elder abuse awareness with colleagues in the state. There is pending legislation to extend tax credits for older adults and retired military-- public hearing is scheduled for June 28 (?). They fully funded supplements for Medical Adult Day Care and Developmental Disability providers.
- There are two vacant positions in the Senior Fellows program --funding comes from the executive branch. There is also a year-round program funded through the council budget and a summer Fellows program for graduate students. Leslie Marks's position in DHCA is open, as is Austin's in the Office of Community Partnerships. Odile said the Age Friendly Senior Fellow position is being converted into a permanent part-time merit position. Marcia said there is an opening in the volunteer Center and Austin emphasized the need to expand the Senior fellow program. Odile will get back to CoA in a few weeks with more information about the program.
- Ms. McGuire is aware that the Commission has been very attentive to the concerns around nursing home inspections and the ongoing dialogue with the state. They are continuing to work through that process with the state, but do not have a more specific answer for us today. The next steps are to pin down the state for legal clarity around the parameters of a potential Memorandum of Understanding. The relative authority in both state and county law. Mr. Albernoz, HHS Committee chair, would like to have a briefing on this matter in the fall to receive more concrete information.
- Ms. McGuire's slide presentation was an overview of the budget process from the council perspective. There is Primary Election coming up on July 19th. This year election will have significant amount of change--the council will increase to 11 members. The council will have seven districts and four at large members. The county executive and all offices are up for election at the same time. The terms are not staggering, and some council members are term limited (Mr. Rice, Miss Navarro, and Mr. Riemer).
- Fall and early winter budget process: time to communicate your priorities and to see what is feasible from the executive's perspective before it comes over to council. There are two budgets in the county, a capital budget (all major construction and buildings), and the operating budget. Capital budget is released by the County Executive, January 15th. Health and Human Services does not tend to have very many projects. They try to provide some additional supports to individuals in crisis, school based health centers and wellness centers and community recreation centers. Council holds public hearings on the capital budget at the beginning of February. March 15th is when the executive transmits his recommended operating budget to the council, kicking off operating budget season, which is short and intense. By-laws dictate that the council has to approve the budget before June 1st. Hearings on the operating budget are held in early to mid-April and then council committees hold work sessions on budgets. The Commission can provide testimony and can communicate with council members individually.

- County Council President Albernoz joined us. He expressed his deepest appreciation to the Commission on Aging. He has had the opportunity of working with CoA for sixteen years. “If you all were in the Major League baseball you would have the highest batting percentage of any of the other boards, committees, and commissions in terms of success getting over the goal line your projects, initiatives, and policies”. Also said our aging population remains the fastest growing in the county. It is both a moral obligation and an economic/social service imperative that we strengthen our social safety net and provide as many services and support as we can to allow folks to live and age with dignity and in community as long as they are able.
- He shared a story: the Rec Dept’s youth development and aging teams put together a “Senior Prom” in partnership with Blair and Einstein High Schools at the Holiday Park Senior Center. He got there towards end of the event. A woman introduced herself to him and thanked him because that was the first time she’d danced with someone since her husband, who loved to dance, passed away three years prior. “That moment really solidified for him just how important these programs and services are for all county citizens.

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Request from Commissioners for copy of the slide presentation.

Liaison Updates- Boards, Commissions, Committees

- Department of Recreation and Parks- Sara Swarr

We launched our Long Branch Older adult summer camp called Senior Adventurers on Tuesday, June 21. They went to Brookside Gardens, will go swimming at MLK swimming pool and end with a big luau celebration at Long Branch center. Older Adult camp at Damascus Senior Center following the same structure: they will do some nature walks, go to the Germantown swimming pool, and then also have a big, large luau the last day.

June 22 was the large Barbecue Bonanza that County Council President Albernoz attended. Several hundred seniors came to Smokey Glen Park, either driving themselves or taking the bus transportation provided from their seven senior centers. It was a really momentous event-- lots of fun, dancing to music underneath the pavilions, playing bingo and other games, and enjoying the delicious food. Waiting to get the people actual headcount from all of our registrations. On the same day summer camp training was launched for 350 seasonal staff. They reviewed all policies and procedures to kick off summer camp starting next week. Sara will double check on Longwood bathroom question.

Department of Transportation- Denise Isreal

The Call-n-Ride age of eligibility has been lowered from 65 to 63, so we will offer the program to more residents. Ride On fares will remain free through July 31, however in August the fare will change to one dollar. Fares will continue to be free for seniors and people with disabilities and youth under 18 or in high school. Last weekend we offered CDL job fair to increase bus drivers; over 100 people attended. The Metro Center sales office will close on June 30. You can purchase metro cards online, Giants or CVS. Seniors can get metro cards from the county libraries.

Age Friendly – Marcia Pruzan

We are actively crossing the spectrum of county government and partnerships in our community. Seven of the ten age friendly progress reports are finished; holding out hope that the last three will get done soon. We are working on a regional Age Friendly Expo for November 9th; a flyer is forthcoming. Topics will be transportation, housing, long term care workforce, health systems, and emergency preparedness. It will be a free daylong event that will include a resource directory.

Commission on Health- Betsy Carrier

Commission on Health had a very robust meeting. They are working on their priorities such as transportation access to health appointments, violence as a public health issue, and ventilation in schools. They have some openings on this commission. She replied to a question that it is her understanding that they do not take comments from non-board members. She will check it out.

- Adult Public Guardianship Review Board- Stephanie Edelstein

Stephanie is a member of this board, technically, in a Commission on Aging-designated position. The Commission advocates for the public guardianship program. Maryland is the only state that has a multi-disciplinary board that reviews public guardianships. Guardianships are for people who have lost the ability to make decisions for themselves and the court has found they need to have the guardian to make decisions for them. When there is no family or other interested person to make decisions for them, the State delegates the role to the County. Commission on Aging advocates for social work positions to help those clients. Every six months, a county board reviews the guardianships, hearing reports from social workers and making recommendations to the court on whether those guardianships should continue, or should be modified in some way.

End of Life – Laurie Pross- no report

- Department of Recreation and Parks- Kendell Matthews- no report
- Transportation – Wayne Berman- no report

Commission on Aging Business

- Approval of Minutes
 - Motion to approve Consent agenda made by Joyce and seconded by Eddie. Approved
- Budget report- David Engel
 - **Disbursements:** flowers for Katie Smith \$68.88 , payment in memory of Sidney Kramer to Solve/ ME nonprofit for \$50.45 and deposit on public forum video production work \$250
 - **Ending balance:** \$4,375.78
- **Chair's report**
 - No update on American Rescue Plan Act (APRP) funds. Access Hears has provisional approval.
 - Work has begun on editing the public forum video to post on the website. PSA pending, waiting to hear about progress.
 - Lesley Frey will provide an overview of the legislative process on July 18, 6 -7:30 pm. She highly recommended that commissioners attend. Will send out announcement to

CoA. Also, Lesley will be our guest speaker in September to talk about ways to improve COA advocacy.

- Workforce Taskforce is working on focus groups.
- **Discussion of County Council Budget for 2023**
 - Shawn is putting together a chart that shows what the Commission asked for and what we actually received.
 - Barbara will prepare a thank you to the County Council for supporting services for older adults. She will send it to CoA members for review and input.
- **Report on strategy for OHCQ Nursing Home Quality Survey issue- Janice Zalen**
 - At last Public Policy meeting we decided to start our lobbying at the state level to get some answers.
 - We really need to reach out all over the place to try to get information. It has been a year now and as one county worker told Janice it is “radio silence.” Previously OHCQ had good relationships with several of Montgomery County staff. Unfortunately, there has not been any annual inspections since COVID. There have many complaints as there always are to the state and only 6 complete investigations. This is a severe problem.
 - Members of the Public Policy committee have been assigned tasks. Shawn will research the State’s oversight committee on quality care in nursing facilities and assisted living facilities. She was tasked with reaching out informally to two of the members who live in Montgomery County. Ryan was tasked to informally reach state to senators or representatives over the telephone to discuss the problem and maybe MOU. Wayne, spoke with to Steveann Ellis who is the state long term care ombudsman, but the feedback was we are working on it and will report back to you. Janice was asked to write a letter that will go to the state legislators asking for their help getting answers and getting information. Public Policy Committee members are reviewing the letter. There are a couple of questions we still need to answer. The status right now: working hard.
- **Progress for July 28th Budget Priorities meeting and budget priority vote**
 - All Commissioners are expected to participate on at least one committee: that is their opportunity to offer budget priorities for consideration. New ideas will not be accepted during the July 28 budget meeting.
 - Odile Brunetto and Patrice L. McGhee will provide input to Barbara by July 1.
 - Co-Chairs will submit final budget priorities to Barbara by July 21st and no new budget items will be accepted after July 21st
 - Barbara will send out a document with all of the committee priorities to the full COA ,so that people have a chance to review it before the July 28th.
 - During the July 28th budget meeting, each committee will have up to ten minutes to present their priorities.
 - After all committee presentations, there will be open discussion.
 - A voting form will be distributed shortly after the July 28th meeting. Commissioners will be asked to rank their top five priorities in order from one to five and send form to Shawn who will calculate the votes.
 - The list of priorities will be reported back out to the CoA members.

- Questions:
The CoA priorities list will be sent Dr Crowel and DHHS in August. Sometimes the Department asks for two priorities and one page write up, but we will try to put in a few more priorities. Typically, a meeting in the fall Barbara will present the budget priorities and again at the legislative breakfast and then of course we schedule one on one meetings with county council members to promote our budget priorities.

Question: What is the role of non-profits?

- Non-Profits needed in the community
 - Decide if want to fund it and how much
 - Nonprofits applied for community grants in the past
 - The range of topics is broad: community grants can fund the arts, events, educational programs, health programs, transportation programs, etc.
 - Non-profits can be a line item in the county budget
 - County is in the process of forming a new grant office to work with grant recipients, review applications, approve grants and monitor the grants.
- **Summer Solstice COA party- Laurie Pross**
Laurie extended an invitation to everyone to the Summer Solstice Party at her home on Sunday, June 26 at 7:00 pm. Feel free to bring a spouse, partner, or a friend and a light supper will be served. The party will be mostly outside, there is a screened porch and French doors lots of fresh air. She thought this is a nice because as a group we have not gotten together. Email Laurie if you plan to come by Friday.

Committee Reports

- Health and Wellness
Mostly taken up with setting priorities and to continue to work on honing the presentation. We continue to focus on the project In Life Transitions. We have to be sensitive to the cultural diversity of the people. Representatives from the African American, Hispanic, and the Asian initiatives programs will be invited to our committee meeting in September to address this issue.
- Aging in Community
We went through category priority areas included food security, technology, transportation, housing, and reviewed some of the action items from past meetings. In September villages we will have a portion of the meeting to discuss how to incorporate villages into the AIC.
- Public Policy
Janice Zalen's report addressed PPC recent work.
- Communication
50 plus in June: End of Life Issues with Dianne Rehm and Ben Marcantonio (who previously spoke to us). Having Diane Rehm made me realize that we can shoot for the stars, we can get national figures. The next two months' focus is going to be healthy aging with the Director of Healthy Aging, Holy Cross Hospital as well as the Medical Director at the Center for Successful Aging at MedStar. Katie will be back soon.

Our monthly meeting Monday, June 27, 1 to 2:30 pm. Shawn I will get the library people to let us know what kind of library stuff we need. Also just to plan an ambassador program and are developing a list of retirement communities we can send periodic emails to with information important to older adults. We have about 25 contacts on the list so far.

New Business

Shawn

- Opportunity for people to apply to be a member of a Board, Committee and Commission, went out in April. People applied and it is in the hands of the boards and commissions staff at the county level to screen the applicants and decide who should be interviewed. Interviews are conducted by the CoA recruitment committee and results sent to county council staff. Nominees are sent a letter from the County Executive which must be confirmed by the County Council. The letter includes term dates of your appointment such as appointment date, confirmation date by County Council, and first Term Ending date . Currently we have five vacancies.
- Libraries- Marsha went to two libraries and did not find older adult materials. Shawn will check with the head librarian about this issues and order materials. She feels the best way to have materials in libraries is to hand deliver.
- Action Items
 - Shawn to put together a chart that shows what the Commission asked for and what we actually received.
 - Shawn will try to work with Beth and Essie on nursing home issues.
 - Shawn check status of recruitment of new commissioners.
 - Shawn will try check with libraries about older adult library materials.
 - Barbara to implement budget plan for July 28 meeting.

Meeting adjourned 11:52 am motion made by Joyce and seconded by Marsha. Approved